

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GROVE HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH,  
DUNSTABLE**

**ON MONDAY 17 JUNE 2024 FROM 7 pm**

Present: Councillors Louise O’Riordan (Town Mayor), Sally Kimondo (Deputy Town Mayor), Gregory Alderman (Chair), Nicholas Kotarski (Vice-Chair), Kenson Gurney, Liz Jones, Richard Attwell, Wendy Bater, Peter Hollick, John Gurney, Phillip Crawley, and Johnson Tamara.

In Attendance: Councillor Robert Blennerhassett with Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager), Lisa Scheder (Head of Corporate Services) James Slack (Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager) and Rachel Connor (Marketing and Communications Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Matthew Brennan and Michelle Henderson

Public: Nil

**131/24 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 18 March 2024 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

**132/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no specific declarations of interest.

**133/24 ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Members received the report provided.

**134/24 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Councillor Crawley entered the chamber at 7:06 pm.

The Communications and Marketing Officer summarised the report provided to members.

Councillor O’Riordan mentioned that Town, the Talk of the Town had not been issued to certain newer estates and asked officers to double check that this would be resolved in the future.

ACTION: Marketing and Communications Officer

Councillor Jones asked if it would be possible for the Councillor Open Public Meetings (Surgeries) to be advertised earlier in advance to encourage attendance.

### **135/24 FINANCE**

The Head of Corporate Services summarised the reports to members.

The Head of Corporate Services updated Members that following a budgetary forecast carried out in light of the ongoing works at Priory House, it was now estimated that the services would achieve an underspend of approximately £100,000 in the current year, mainly due to the reduction in staffing during works. Although it is too early in this financial year to be certain, it was noted that this underspend may enable the Council to use towards maintaining the required minimum general reserve which had been depleted.

It was proposed, seconded and

#### **RESOLVED:**

- i. To note the revenue budgetary control report for the financial year ending 31 March 2024
- ii. To note detail of the Council's year end balances and earmarked reserves as of 31 March 2024
- iii. To note and accept the final Internal Audit Report for financial year 2023/24
- iv. To recommend to Full Council to appoint the Internal Auditor for 2024/25
- v. To approve the updated Treasury Management Policy
- vi. To note the current investments

### **136/24 COMPLIANCE AND FACILITIES**

The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager summarised the report to Members.

### **137/24 GROVE HOUSE BUILDING WORKS**

The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager summarised the report and pointed out the key parts.

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** The defer this agenda item into the confidential section of tonight's meeting in light of commercial considerations.

## 138/24 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- Citizen's Advice Management Committee – Councillor Richard Attwell

No update

- Dunstable International Town Twinning Association – Councillors Louise O’Riordan, Peter Hollick and Kenson Gurney

Councillor Hollick advised members from their last meeting that it would be good to have more Councillors involved and more members to be a part of the association.

- Hospice at Home Management Committee - Councillor Wendy Bater

Councillor Bater advised members she has not yet attended a meeting however the AGM is on 2 July 2024. Councillor Jones advised that the trustees are all getting together next week to have a discussion regarding finding more funding to continue to deliver the services.

- Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillors Louise O’Riordan and Gregory Alderman

Councillor O’Riordan advised there was a meeting in May which approved the quote for some new furniture for residents to enjoy the garden more. They are currently at full capacity.

- Ashton Schools Foundation - Councillors Peter Hollick and Gregory Alderman

Works are continuing to be done by both Manshead and Ashton St Peters Primary schools..

- Chew’s Foundation - Councillors Matthew Brennan and Kenson Gurney

No update

- Poor’s Land Charity - Councillors Kenson Gurney and Liz Jones

Councillor Jones advised that the Maundy Thursday distribution had been carried out successfully.

- Lockington Charity and Marshe Charity - Councillors Kenson Gurney and Liz Jones

Councillor Kenson Gurney updated members that one of the properties is empty and requires various works.

- Dunstable and District Scout Council Executive - Councillor Nicholas Kotarski

Councillor Kotarski updated Members that the AGM is this Wednesday where a new leader will be elected.

### **139/24 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** in terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and therefore, pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

### **140/24 GROVE HOUSE BUILDING WORKS REPORT**

Members further discussed the report and requested detailed information be circulated before a decision was made.

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** To defer this matter to Full Council following the circulation of additional information.

### **141/24 REFERRAL REPORTS – SPENDING RESERVE FROM GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised the reports to members.

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** To release £214,337 from the following reserves:

(a) Vehicle and Equipment Reserve	£ 92,337
(b) Developers Contributions Reserve	£ 11,723
(c) Open Spaces Improvement Plan Reserve	£ 10,277
(d) Grounds Depot Extension Reserve	£100,000
Total	£214,337.

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** To release the monies proposed from the Open Spaces Improvement Plan Reserve as per the report circulated.

### **142/24 STAFFING REPORT FOR DECISION**

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised the report.

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** to agree the report recommendation.

**The meeting closed at 8:28 pm.**